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Gen. John M. Thayer.

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**GEN. JOHN M. THAYER.**

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MARCH 13, 1896.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. ANDREWS, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

**REPORT:**

[To accompany H. R. 6644.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 6644) granting a pension of \$100 per month to John M. Thayer, late brigadier and brevet major-general of volunteers, having carefully considered the same, respectfully report as follows:

In 1855 the Territorial legislature of Nebraska provided for the organization of the militia and for the calling out of volunteers for the defense of the settlers, and elected John M. Thayer, brigadier-general to command the troops on the frontier, and subsequently elected him to be major-general. It devolved on General Thayer to defend the people of the frontier settlements against the hostile Indians. He was not only protecting the settlers of the Territory of Nebraska, but was defending what was then the frontier of the United States. This service he performed continuously from 1855 to 1861, and has never received any compensation therefor.

In 1861 he raised the First Regiment Nebraska Infantry, took it to St. Louis, and reported to General Grant at Pilot Knob, Mo. In the battle of Donelson General Thayer commanded a brigade, and at a critical moment, when General McClelland's division had exhausted their ammunition and were compelled to fall back closely pursued by the enemy, General Thayer rushed his brigade forward, got in the rear of the retiring division, formed a line of battle, met General Buckner's army and drove them back into their works. For this gallant service he was given great credit and honorable mention by General Grant. He commanded a brigade in the battle of Shiloh, at the siege of Vicksburg, led his brigade as a storming column at Chickasaw Bayou, had his horse shot from under him in the battle at Arkansas Post, and participated in other battles.

The records of the War Department show that he was promoted from colonel to brigadier-general of volunteers October 4, 1862, and that he commanded a brigade from that time until the close of the war; that on March 13, 1865, he was made a brevet major-general of volunteers "for gallant and meritorious service during the war."

The evidence in this case shows that General Thayer is now 77 years of age, and that he is wholly without means of support, and a subject of charity for his neighbors and friends.

Dr. W. G. Houtz testifies:

\* \* \* That for the last four years he has had the said John M. Thayer under his care and medical treatment, and much the greater part of that time he has been

wholly unable to do any kind of manual labor, and for many weeks at a time he was confined to his bed. Determination of blood to his head is of such frequent occurrence as to constantly threaten apoplexy. Loss of locomotion (locomotor ataxia) unfits him to be left without some one to be constantly with him and care for him.

N. S. Harwood, president of the First National Bank, of Lincoln, Nebr., testifies as follows:

For the last four or five years he has been in a helpless condition, the only means of earning a livelihood has been by his pen, and but very little of this period has he been in sufficient health to enable him to do this. He is a very proud and sensitive gentleman; he will not let his poverty and helplessness be known, and it is impossible for friends who would gladly render him assistance to do so. I think he would rather starve or die of neglect than to accept alms. He is now dangerously ill at the home of his comrade in arms, Capt. Adam Bax, who is himself broken in health, and whose family is in no suitable condition to care for him.

There is abundant evidence establishing the fact that the said John M. Thayer is wholly without means of any kind and that he is entirely unable to do anything for his own support, and that his condition is such as to require some one to be with and care for him all the time.

Your committee respectfully recommend that the bill do pass.

